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Edgy stuff...

TT history continues to elude one of its most popular racers. Guy Martin increased his podium tally to fifteen on the Island during the 2014 edition last week even if rival Michael Dunlop was the central star with a quadruple set of winners' trophies. Martin described his Tyco Suzuki set-up for the Senior curtain-closer as one of best he has ever ridden across the perilous road course

Photo by www.suzuki-racing.com



TT





AMA-MX

Roczen rampant...

Ken Roczen has started his very first AMA 450MX season in the same vein as his supercross campaign; pretty much with a trail of fire emanating from his rear wheel. The KTM star (for how much longer?) is increasing his stock even more with every controlled lap at the front of an impeccable field in the United States

Photo by Simon Cudby









Worth a sweat...

World Superbike in 2014 continues to blow one way or the other. In the stuffiness of Sepang it was the Aprilias – and in particular Marco Melandri, operating in fine style at the circuit where he took his second-to-last MotoGP podium in 2007 – that owned both races in Malaysia. The championship refuses to fall into the favour of one athlete so far

Photo by Aprilia Racing/Milagro

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TREY CANARD
Team Honda Muscle Milk



AMA-MX

THUNDER VALLEY NATION

LAKEWOOD (CO) • JUNE 7th • Rnd 3 of 12

450MX winner: Ken Roczen, KTM

250MX winner: Blake Baggett, Kawasaki



PLAY

STILL SQUASH

By Steve Matthes, Photos by Simon Cudby





Round three of the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships took place at one of the more underrated venues on the circuit in Lakewood, Colorado which was also site of the 2010 Motocross of Nations. We've seen almost exactly the same races and results at the first two rounds and although Lakewood produced some variety, there are several main truths still remain in the series. The Star Yamaha duo of Cooper Webb and Jeremy Martin remain dominant in the 250's and Kenny Roczen and Ryan Dungey are the men to beat in the 450MX class.

Here are some random thoughts from the day in Colorado:

Kenny Roczen had another great race. A rider that admitted to wearing down at the end of supercross, has so far went 2-2-1-1-2-1 in six motos and has captured two out of the three 450MX rounds. The former World Champion looks to be raising his game to another level 'outside' and when asked about how he could look so good in motocross as opposed to the end of the supercross campaign, the German told OTOR that it's because motocross comes easier to him.

"I have more experience in outdoors obviously. It's my first ever 450 season so it's definitely long but I'm trying to find myself in a good spot. I'm actually trying to ride 'energy convenient'. I know how to do that better in outdoors since I've ridden it much longer," says Roczen "I just want to keep it on point and clicking them down. I think I have a pretty good chance at getting the championship. I know it's early, but it's definitely good to start off good, just to be able to get a gap and then be consistent."

Kenny almost went 1-1 in Lakewood as he put heavy pressure on Yoshimura Suzuki's James Stewart at the end of Moto 1 but couldn't make the pass. In the second moto he didn't wait around much as he passed early leader Honda Muscle Milk's Trey Canard and checked out.

As we mentioned, James Stewart got out of his early-season funk with a terrific first moto where he passed JGR Yamaha's Josh Grant and got his first moto win of the year. It was especially impressive as Stewart was caught by Dungey and fought him off for half the race until the #5 KTM washed out his front end near the end. Generally speaking, once you get caught from the gap that Stewart had it's tough to wick it up and pick up speed. But that's exactly what Stewart did to give his fans some hope that the rider that once went 24-0 still has some motocross magic. In the second moto Stewart's start wasn't as good and he was only able to get up to third. Afterwards James said that some bike changes they made for the second moto were in the wrong direction so he couldn't push as hard as he did in the first. Still, it was good to see the by-now-old-guy show us that he can be a threat.

-After Roczen, Dungey and Stewart the rest of the 450 class doesn't seem to be anywhere in the same world as the riders listed. Except for Trey Canard that is. He's stuck in this netherworld of being much better than the rest of the field (his team-mate Justin Barcia missed Lakewood with an ankle injury that's rumored to need surgery) and just a tick off the top two guys. Canard led his first laps of the year in the second moto before going back to fourth. He's had a good season with two podiums but there is just something small he's missing from taking wins. It's definitely a glass-half full thing with the #41- he's been great. The KTM guys have just been greater.

In 250MX, Star Yamaha's Jeremy Martin had a couple of streaks broken. He didn't lead every single lap on the day and he didn't win both motos. But he did win one moto, the first one, in convincing fashion. In the second he battled hard with his team-mate Cooper Webb and at one point went down. A third overall was the best he could do but there was no doubt the kid had tons of speed and looked great out there. With almost a two-race lead in the series, Martin's already a solid bet for the title.

So Martin didn't win but you know who did? Monster Pro Circuit's Blake Baggett that's who. BB4 captured his first overall of the season with a 4-1. The first moto was typical Blake Baggett: a shit start, worked his way through the pack and at times was the fastest rider out there. But he ran out of time while still charging and a fourth it was. Second moto he was a different rider as he got a good start and then hounded early leader Christophe Pourcel for a few laps. Once the former national champion got by, he stretched out a lead that wouldn't be topped. It was a vintage Blake Baggett ride and one that he and his Pro Circuit team hope is just the start of good things to come.

A couple of Honda riders in GEICO Honda's Justin Bogle and Troy Lee Designs Jessy Nelson really put on a show at Lakewood with Nelson leading the first moto for a long time before settling for second. Bogle had a very good day, perhaps his best national ride ever, in going 3-2 for second overall. Nelson's been a low-key surprise this season and when he hasn't finished up front, it's been some nice come-from-behind rides. Bogle's taken the confidence from his first 250SX championship this year and really stepped up outdoors.





AMA MX THUNDER VALLEY



Baggett sailing high in the altitude of Lakewood. Jeremy Martin maintained his 100% podium record on the 2014 YZ250F and preserves that red-blue livery...

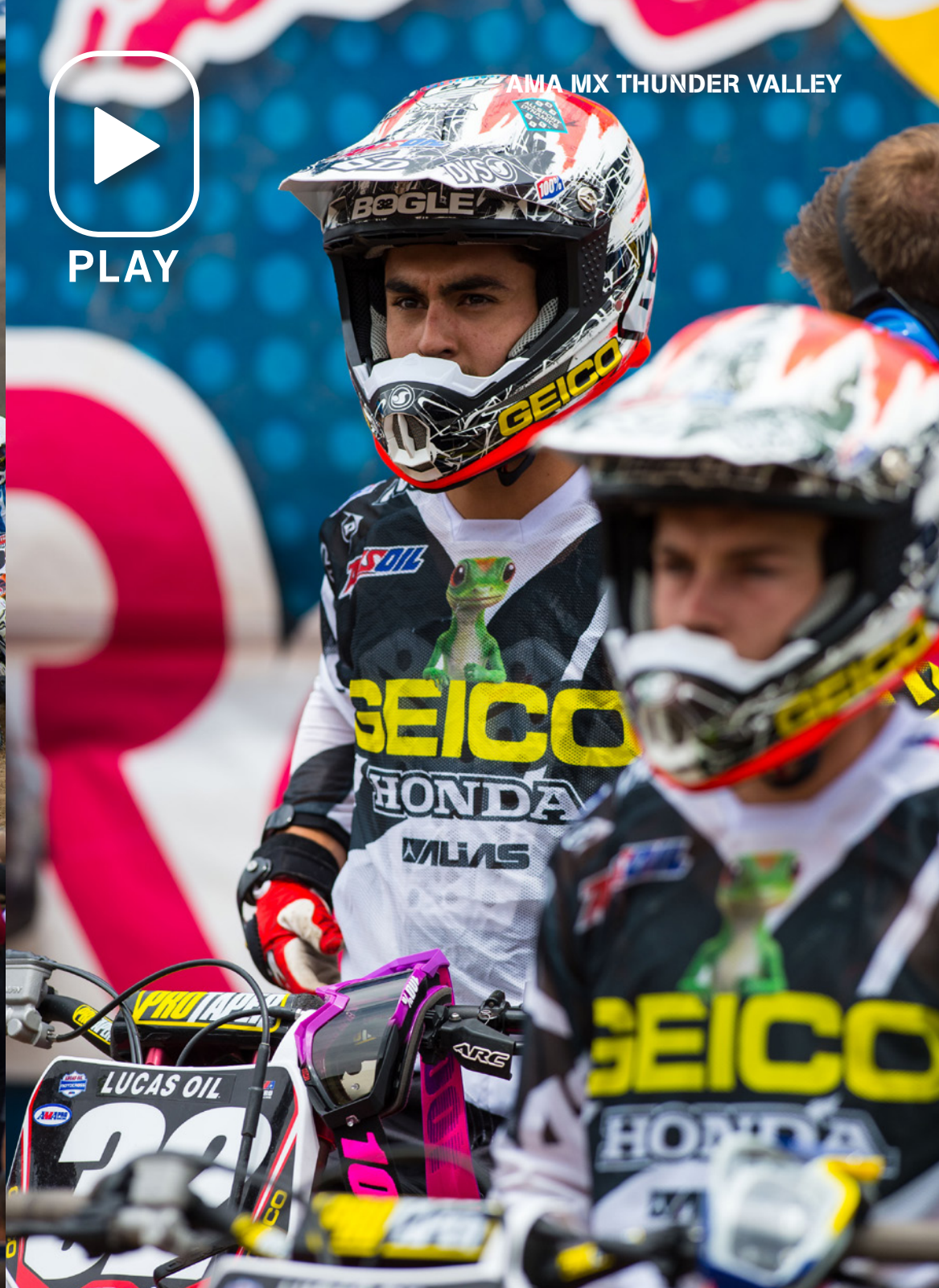






PLAY

AMA MX THUNDER VALLEY



Does Pourcel continue to defy expectation or merely hint at former glories? Depends on your view of the ridiculously talented Frenchman after a year away. A first podium result cannot be far off regardless. Trey Canard (below) operating at the site of his 2010 Motocross of Nations team win while Roczen (right) also has good memories of that same event...taking his first MX2 overall triumph four years ago



AMA MX THUNDER VALLEY



PLAY

Distinctive uphill start at Thunder Valley and the Yamahas again prove they have the guts when it counts. A close call for the KTMs on the inside







Marvin Musquin gets back up to speed with a fifth position. The Frenchman is fighting back from another injury but remains one of the more stylish 250 riders in the pack. Andrew Short (right) picks a rut on home turf

AMA MX PRO MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

450MX RESULT		
Riders		
1	Ken Roczen, GER	KTM
2	James Stewart, USA	Suzuki
3	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
4	Trey Canard, USA	Honda
5	Josh Grant, USA	Yamaha

450MX STANDINGS (AFTER 3 OF 12 ROUNDS)		
Riders		Points
1	Ken Roczen	141
2	Ryan Dungey	129
3	James Stewart	111
4	Trey Canard	110
5	Brett Metcalfe	89

250MX RESULT		
Riders		
1	Blake Baggett, USA	Kawasaki
2	Justin Bogle, USA	Honda
3	Jeremy Martin, USA	Yamaha
4	Jessy Nelson, USA	Honda
5	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM

250MX STANDINGS (AFTER 3 OF 12 ROUNDS)		
Riders		Points
1	Jeremy Martin	140
2	Cooper Webb	114
3	Christophe Pourcel	93
4	Blake Baggett	33
5	Justin Bogle	30



JONNY WALKER

DOMINATING THE IRON GIANT

20 years of Erzbergrodeo. Two decades of dust, dirt and tears at the Red Bull Hare Scramble. 15 times a KTM bike with the world's best enduro rider aboard has been the first across the finish line. Jonny Walker and his KTM 300 EXC demonstrate KTM's total dominance at the anniversary edition on the iron giant. He demoralises his opponents with a commanding race and an overwhelming winning margin of nearly a quarter of an hour. **Four orange bikes in the top six – WE ARE HARD ENDURO!**

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Photo: Philip Platzer/Red Bull Content Pool

Please make no attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scenes, always wear protective clothing and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations! The illustrated vehicles may vary in selected details from the production models and some illustrations feature optional equipment available at additional cost.



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KTM FACTORY RACING

KTM



Red Bull KTM's Ryan Dungey won the opening round of the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championships at Glen Helen, finished second at Hangtown and now this past weekend was in prime spot to make a move on leader James Stewart when he washed his front end out. That was it for Dungey, a third was the best he could do and his second in moto two was good enough for only third overall on the day.

More and more the American 450MX class is looking to be a battle between Dungey and his teammate Kenny Roczen. We may see some ups and downs from Roczen and Stewart but one thing we won't see is Dungey being anything but fast, in shape and consistent. It's what he does. The two-time 450MX champion isn't flashy and isn't prone to making outrageous comments but he's as professional as they come and is now second all-time in 450MX national wins. And he's also in for one hell of a fight with the young German. I caught up with Ryan after most riders were long gone at Lakewood and he was still signing autographs and taking pictures with fans.

A good day of racing. Obviously you came up a bit short, but it was some excitement for fans in both motos.

Yeah, it was good. The first moto...honestly I wish we could have made the pass for the lead; that would have been much easier on us, just being able to ride fresh laps and stuff like that. But, man, it was tough. I think all of us would agree it was hard to pass on this track. But we gave it our best effort. Just had a couple hiccups there that put us back to 4th unfortunately. But then the second moto, got off to a decent start, worked our way into 2nd. And Ken was riding really good. I tried to put the pressure on him but he just inched away a little bit. Nothing like a big gap, but just a little bit too much to capitalize. All in all we ended up 3rd overall but it's early in the season. Hopefully we can pick a few things up from this.

In the second moto there were three laps in a row that you were quicker. You got the gap down to 2.2 from over 4 seconds. Then what happened? Was there one lap where you screwed up?

A few mistakes for sure. The lappers were gnarly out there. I can't believe... we come up on lappers so fast these days. I guess it's not a bad thing, but everybody's got to deal with that, including Kenny. And once we kind of settled about that distance, about 3 laps to go, I couldn't close it up. I thought we were going to be able to get right to him and maybe make something happen but we weren't able to.

I think this is the hardest packed Lakewood I think I've seen in a long time.

Yeah, it was. If it weren't for the rain earlier this week it would have been a lot harder. Well, they probably would have tilled it but it would have been a different story. The ruts got pretty deep and nasty. There was a lot of moisture in the ground.

I'm really surprised that you and Kenny seem to be a little bit better than everybody else. I thought this class was going to be this great, big battle.

It's early in the season yet and maybe people are figuring stuff out, but Red Bull KTM's done a great job this year with testing and being ready for the first race. I felt we were really solid. All three races it's been great. We're always looking to make things a little bit better but I feel like we're in a good area, we got a good program, a good team. Always can fine-tune and try to get better for sure. But we're in a good spot. I'm really happy with that.

Do you like the track coming this weekend's track at High Point?

Yeah, High Point's good. It has tended to be a little bit harder over the last few years, I don't know why. But it's good. The elevation is fun and has some good ruts. I'm excited to get back to the East Coast.



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MAKER OF COOL

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer

Marc Blanchard has fashioned much of what we have seen and liked on tracks and trails for the last two decades and now overseas one of the fastest and most fetching moto brands on the market: 100%. Here the Frenchman tells us why and how a move

to California helped shape his vision through eras with JT Racing, ground-breaking with One Industries (which was sold in a life-changing deal) and now re-inventing the look for goggles with customary partner in crime Ludo Boinard...

MARC BLANCHARD





FEATURE





The feeling of finding and making a success in the industry...

You can feel it. There is a point when the distributors are getting your product line and they start to realise that you are on to something and they open the order book. You think 'this is going to work'. At One Industries we were living the dream but always making the right choices, not the choices that would make the company richer. Like the Bailey [dedicated design to the AMA motocross legend] helmet... we did it because we felt it was right, not because it would pay the bills. With 100%, when we started again, we were more passionate about our jobs that just trying to make 'another One Industries'. It was a different product line and something we hadn't done so it was another challenge. It was a chance to gather our friends and write another story.

Moving to the U.S. in the 1980s and forging a new career chapter...

My dream when I was a kid was to work at JT Racing. At the time it was the Burton of snowboard or the Fox of motocross now. Back in the day, when I had that opportunity, I was like a kid in a candy store. I wanted to be in California and to work there. JT was OK and ultimately it did not work out but I kept my goal and that was to design some cool stuff and keep involved in motocross. It took a long time to tell you the truth. It wasn't just a couple of years. I used the time at JT to learn the business and how to live here. I've lived here since 1988, so I'm probably American...but then I'm European when I look at stuff.

The U.S. being the principal breeding ground for moto...

Oh yeah. The market is here. The dealerships are huge. The amounts of money companies spend on displays or point of sale material is incomparable to Europe. I'm sure there are some big places in Europe that I'm unaware of but here you can see and feel that the market is so big. Absolutely. I think in Europe it is harder to start a business – especially now – whereas here everything is favoured towards the entrepreneur. If you have a good idea then you'd better do it right now because five other people might have the same; they won't think twice and that is the mentality. When you arrive here you have that easiness and facilitation to start your business, to do it from your garage and go from there.



FEATURE

A black and white photograph of a classic car's open rear door. The door is dark-colored with a wood-grain panel and a leather-trimmed interior. A person's hand is visible on the right side of the door. The background shows a palm tree, a house, and a beach.

“Coming to California opened my mind. I love LA for the creativity, shapes and architecture.”

MARC BLANCHARD



Absorbing and using California and the whole scene...

Coming to California opened my mind. To tell you the truth I'm not influenced much by the motorcycle market itself but more from what I see around me. I love modern architecture and fashion. I'm not really looking specifically inside the bike world for creativity. We went to Glamis [famous dunes on the Mexican border] and just being in the dunes was cool. All the people and machinery there...it is such an amazing scene that you won't see anywhere else, definitely not in Europe. So to have things like that on your doorstep...you can come up with some great ideas and visuals.

Finding design...

I still have a lot of ties in Europe and I look at what's out there. I think this is what I bring to the table in America: a more global idea of the trends. What is cool here is not necessarily cool in France or Italy or anywhere. In the motorcycle industry the directions are very specific and California will always be a place that is looked at for graphics, customisation and those sorts of products. I think there is great stuff in Europe from outside the motorcycle industry and you need to keep an eye on it and see how and where to use it. Outside of motorcycling – in my opinion - designers are better in Europe than in the U.S. There are a lot of companies, generally, that come up with good ideas but they are not really sensitive with design or trends. People ask me 'how come it is so easy for you?' The key is being able to visualise, and then push to take those ideas onwards. People don't always go for that...for a variety of reasons.

Origins of the Barstow goggle...

We could tell that the movement was coming. When it comes to vintage motocross, yes, maybe Europe has the upper-hand but when it comes to custom bikes, street-bikes and the whole Café Racer movement and dirt-track then there is nothing more American. I think some European scenes have looked at it and embraced it. I was very adamant to do some-

thing for that market already two years ago and from the first moment we started with 100% we wanted to do a vintage goggle that could crossover not only to motocross but also to the café racer market. I don't think people got the concept right away but they will eventually and we've seen other shops, like custom places, carrying it. If we are in Deus Ex Machina [famed Australian custom builder company] then we can be sure that others will as well like See See Motorcycles in Portland and other retailers in California and New York. I think the potential is huge.

Origins of ideas...

They come out in my shower! Sometimes! It depends what it is. I work in different ways. I can do catalogues or adverts or specific products or websites. There are a lot of different segments with a different approach. If it's a product then I have to work at it because I'm not that great. A catalogue or ad then those come easier for me and I can find something quickly. For products...more thought is required. The concept for an advert can appear from out of anywhere. When it comes to execution then it is just the accumulation of past work and practice that gets the material on the screen. I don't think I would be able to explain how I'm doing it. I just have a feel for the look. I'm a good critic of my work. I don't like old stuff usually. After six months then I'm over it and tired. I want to kill that product and make a new one!

Embracing new fads and tools to get the job done...

It comes and goes with the technology. I remember when Photoshop showed up and people were overdoing it with the filtering. I'm not that guy. For me the simpler the better. I think technology just shrinks the time to deadline. Instead of a week a job can take hours. You can do stuff a lot better and it takes a load off your shoulders. In the past just having to re-touch a photo required a lab! It was insane. So for that change it is like 'night and day'.



100% has progressed so rapidly...

It is something I cannot really explain. At One we worked for ten years and we set up all the parameters to reach that goal but it took a long time. I don't know if it is because of the experience or because of the people we know or perhaps the staff – because they all lived through that One Industries story – maybe that is why it is happening faster. You can have the greatest product but if the public doesn't buy it...They seem to like it and it comes down to the different elements: for sure the design but it is also the distribution and we have a great deal with Parts [Unlimited, worldwide distribution company]. We also have a product that gives a lot of bang for your bucks in terms of what is inside the box. For eighty bucks you have twenty tear-offs, an extra lens, a bag and cool packaging. All that costs money and we make sure that the consumer gets enough for what he/she is spending and I think they do. Also Ludo came up with a great idea, which was different models using the same lens. It is something that doesn't seem important but for the dealers and everybody that carries your product it is sweet. It adds a consistency to the brand and the beauty of it is that all the goggles seem so different but carry the same lens. There are different options.



MARC BLANCHARD

The perks of success...filling the garage with bikes?

We used to! At One Industries there were a lot around but then everybody got kids. I'm not getting any younger and don't want to break any bones. I'm lucky in a way because my job doesn't have a 'time limit'. If you look at some of the best architects and designers in the world then they are producing their best stuff late on. I enjoy what I do and it seems like people enjoy the product, so that's great for me. I won't stretch it [his career] too long if I feel that I'm not in touch with the trends or the market. I'll hire young kids for the next step. I don't want to be the guy that holds on too long...but at the moment I love my work.





MX **GRAND PRIX OF FRANCE**
ST JEAN D'ANGELY • JUNE 1st • Rnd 9 of 17

MXGP winner: Clement Desalle, Suzuki
MX2 winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM

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MX

GRAND PRIX OF FRANCE

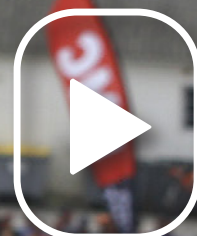
ST JEAN D'ANGELY • JUNE 1st • Rnd 9 of 17

MXGP winner: Clement Desalle, Suzuki
MX2 winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM



FANCY OF THE FRENCH

Photos by Ray Archer



PLAY

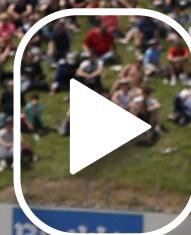
Win number 39 for Jeffrey Herlings who said his decision over 2015 (MX2 again or MXGP) will be made by the end of June and involves Red Bull and KTM; the comment provoked more speculation that he could steer a Husqvarna in MXGP



Persistence and brilliance from Desalle led to victory number three of 2014 when Cairoli faltered. Both riders were critical of the track and rutty landings from the big and fast step-downs



MXGP FRANCE



PLAY



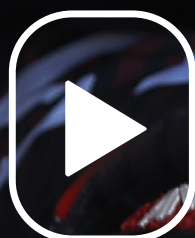
Eight podiums in a row for Jeremy Van Horebeek, allowing Yamaha to breathe



Evgeny Bobryshev (above) is riding for his HRC saddle and fifth place was a solid first step, even if his move to knock-off Tommy Searle was very wreckless. Max Anstie's Yamaha (99) gets some new fuel. The Brit was dubiously disqualified from round four in Italy for an illegal mixture.

Kevin Strijbos (opposite) gets ready to tackle his least favourite track of the year. The Belgian had a worthy podium shout until he crashed into a fallen David Philippaerts

MXGP FRANCE



PLAY

Once again Herlings is the outstanding rider in MXGP and FIM Motocross World Championship competition. He is still unbeaten in each GP he has contested since the end of 2012. France represented his fourth double in a row







An impressive win for Livia Lancelot (this photo) threw the MXW title chase wide open while Brian Hsu (right) achieved a career landmark in EMX125 with the sole Suzuki in the series



MXGP FRANCE



MXGP FRANCE



Steven Frossard gave the crowd something to cheer in MXGP. The former championship runner-up is one rider waiting to see what step team-mate Gautier Paulin (below) takes with his career before having an indication for 2015. Paulin still does not know when he will return to MXGP action after thumb surgery. Tyla Rattray is a question mark for Italy after a warm-up crash led to a concussion





CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MXGP OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Clement Desalle, BEL	Suzuki
2	Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL	Yamaha
3	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
4	Steven Frossard, FRA	Kawasaki
5	Evgeny Bobryshev, RUS	Honda

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
2	Arnaud Tonus, SUI	Kawasaki
3	Jordi Tixier, FRA	KTM
4	Romain Febvre, FRA	Husqvarna
5	Valentin Guillod, SUI	KTM

MXGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 9 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	393
2 Clement Desalle	373
3 Jeremy Van Horebeek	358
4 Kevin Strijbos	276
5 Gautier Paulin	205

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 9 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jeffrey Herlings	394
2 Arnaud Tonus	349
3 Romain Febvre	297
4 Jordi Tixier	291
5 Dylan Ferrandis	278

JONNY WALKER

DOMINATING THE IRON GIANT

20 years of Erzbergrodeo. Two decades of dust, dirt and tears at the Red Bull Hare Scramble. 15 times a KTM bike with the world's best enduro rider aboard has been the first across the finish line. Jonny Walker and his KTM 300 EXC demonstrate KTM's total dominance at the anniversary edition on the iron giant. He demoralises his opponents with a commanding race and an overwhelming winning margin of nearly a quarter of an hour. **Four orange bikes in the top six – WE ARE HARD ENDURO!**

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Photo: Philip Platzer/Red Bull Content Pool

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KTM FACTORY RACING

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MX BLOG

ONE DAY...

By Adam Wheeler



I'm in the middle of an article examining the two principle issues that seem to be hot in MXGP: the 23 age rule for the MX2 class that Youthstream President Giuseppe Luongo has already vehemently stated in his column for the official MXGP magazine is going nowhere. The other is the apparent 'ailing' health of the championship, with the declining gate numbers a heavily visual stick that critics like to beat the sport with. They have a point, but as I never cease to tell people...there are two sides to every story.

I digress. The text will pop up in OTOR #83. The central strand of the piece so far is the cost factor involved with racing, and perhaps this is something that doesn't apply specifically to MXGP with a range of motorcycle championships suffering also or desperately trying to change their respective landscapes to make the whole show more economically viable. Motocross took steps to limit financial 'abandon', even if most manufacturers have been looking at ways to trim competition budgets since 2008 anyway. The FIM wisely retained the prototype status and technical freedom of MXGP but also imposed some limitations, chiefly those involving electronics. There are minor restrictions in the technical rulebook but could more be done?

I'm talking about a one day Grand Prix. It might be wasted debate as Giuseppe Luongo was very firm in denouncing this suggestion at an informal media gathering last year, insisting this was one area of a GP tradition he wanted to preserve. I've already heard from at least two senior figures in the MXGP paddock that running one-day would help with cost-cutting in terms of overall travel expenses through a season and even down to elements such as engine wear and

mileage. Some riders as well have also grumbled of the drawn-out GP timetable with relatively little track time on a Saturday.

Would a single day make sense? Youthstream naturally want to maintain the two day format for two reasons: it allows clubs and circuits a double shot at revenue generation and it keeps the fans wanting to make a weekend of a Grand Prix. There is also a 48 hour window to fit all the European support classes that make each round of the world championship a non-stop barrage of track action.

This last point is one of the strong arguments for switching to one-day for MXGP. It would be ideal for Grand Prix riders to arrive on Saturday, interact with fans, perform PR activities, media duties, check out the track and be a part of the event. All the while the European classes would be going through their qualification and races and churning up the terrain into the nice, tough and technical terrain that is one of the wonderful traits of MXGP. Fans could still have their weekend fill of MX (with EMX carrying potential for fast local riders) and have even more access to their heroes on Saturday, clubs can still charge for two days and teams could afford to arrive in an MXGP 'paddock' late on Friday as opposed to Thursday.

TV schedules would be unaffected, GP riders tend to know 90% of the tracks, the timetable suddenly eases and there is a natural build-up to the 'main events' on Sunday. It is hard to find many arguments against implementing this modification to MXGP that might carry some important consequences for teams assessing the budget for a seventeen-eighteen GP campaign and therefore existence inside the sport.

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GAUTIER PAULIN

.....
MXGP WORLD CHAMPION

D **FEATURE**

MODEL STUDENT

AT SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE HRC'S TIM GAJSER HAS ALREADY BEEN UNDER AGE DRINKING ON A GRAND PRIX PODIUM. MEET MXGP'S NEW STARLET & MISCHIEF MAKER

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer



TIM GAJSER



The evolving landscape between the European Championship and Grand Prix MX2 means there are not too many 'green' teenagers at FIM MXGP World Championship level these days and the freak years of the Roczens and Herlings bursting through before their voices had dropped an octave seem to have passed. For now. That's not to say that MX2 is devoid of some ridiculously young and promising talent.

At the top of the pile is Tim Gasjer.

The likeable seventeen year old won practically everything (world and European titles) with a 125cc two-stroke before the obligatory turbulent learning year in GP in 2013. Armed with a factory CRF250R thanks to Honda and HRC, some of that rapier form is building again; the Slovenian grabbed his first GP podium result in the UK three weeks ago and has also inked a deal to retain works status for 2015 and 2016.

Gajser is another prodigal star-in-making with familiar traits: modest background, guiding father and a motocross dedicated family. One distinction is his nationality. There are just two Slovenian's in the FIM Motocross World Championship and that's already a feat for a country wedged between Italy, Hungary and Austria with a population of just over two million and independent from the old Yugoslavian state in 1991; five years before Tim's birth. If he makes it anywhere in this sport then it will already be quite an achievement.

Gajser can cast a serious face but it takes only the slightest of jokes or banter to start him giggling. He carries that mix of steely commitment and unabashed youthful enthusiasm like so many before him who have reached a high level of sport before they are legally allowed to drive. Rarely seen without father and mentor Bogo, Gajser cuts a shy but mature figure in the paddock. His grasp of English is good and

it is easy to see that on the track Tim is a fit and capable racer with countless hours of bike handling and craft in his favour.

Due to his age Gajser is one of the prominent forces for the future of Grand Prix and has another six seasons to snare that first FIM title in MX2 (and for his country). Not bad for a kid who doesn't finish school for another year...

On dealing with more spotlight and his growing status...

It is a little bit different, but I'm still in school and studying as well as training so I keep my feet where they are. I'm in the third term of economics. My grades are good! They need to be because my father said I had to be as good in the class as on the track! For sure it is not easy – both ways – but I am trying. I have two more months in school and then another year and then I can go full Pro. Usually in the winter, when we are home more, I am studying a lot. When the pre-season and the races start then I am away but I keep up with the work and the teachers are really good and help me a lot. We study English as well and the TV is not dubbed so we can hear original version programmes. When I am finished in the school then I think we will move somewhere like Belgium. It is the 'centre' for motocross.

On joining Honda and 'reviving' their fortunes in MX2...

In 2013 I was riding the KTM and it was a year of building experience for 2014 but I had problems with the bike. It was an unbelievably hard season. So we decided to go to Honda for something different and we thought with HRC coming back in a big way for the first time in 25 years it was good timing and a good opportunity. I was also looking at the future because you cannot ignore the size of somebody like Honda. I was not afraid because when I tried the bike I could feel that the handling was amazing and the power was good. I saw and felt enough at the beginning to know that the bike would run well.





On the commitment to the sport...

I was practicing a lot when I was small but motocross was always just a game. It started to get a bit more serious when I was on the 85cc, before then I was never running or thinking about fitness. I started thinking professionally back in 2008, so I was eleven. I was never really into drinking and there didn't seem to be time for parties. Friends would ask me to come out but I knew I had to train the next day. I loved motocross and knew the work had to be done, so it never felt like I was missing or sacrificing something.

On keeping friends at school...

Yeah man! They help me also, and when they come to a Slovenian race then they cheer me on...it's good.

On Slovenia...motocross and background...

It [motocross] is pretty good for such a small country. We have some good young riders in Slovenia and some potential for the years to come. We will see...they need to work hard. I think we have something like five race tracks in the whole country, but there are more private ones of course. There are three quite close to my home one of those is for supercross. I would say motocross is not even in the top ten sports in Slovenia. It is just football, basketball and skiing. I was Slovenian national champion in Judo up until 28 kilos. I also play football to a good level and can ski well. When I had to choose then it was motocross for me. Skiing is great for co-ordination and I liked football because in the winter it was a sport that helped build conditioning.

On a...

A day without motocross? I think mountain biking. The world championship ski resort of Maribor is also just 50km from my house. The house has a big garage for the bikes...and a lot of pets with two dogs, cats and a horse. My sister loves the animals. My older brother took his driving test this year so it has been much easier to get about; I still need to wait!

On the work that needs to be done and Bogo...

Honestly I do not train every day on the bike, just two days a week but every day I am in the gym cycling or running; that's my approach. I work with my father, the connection between us is good and I find that he knows what he is talking about. It has worked so far. My dad rode some European and World Championship races back in the '90s. I was always with him. So from two-three years old I was surrounded by riders and racing. My dad put me on the bike but my mother is also amazing; we are a motocross family because my younger sister and older brother also ride. Having my brother there is an advantage because I always have somebody with me when I run or cycle. It makes things fun.



On the future, improving, supercross and making the most of it...

I need to improve in the sand and we took some steps with that this winter. We stayed in Sardinia for a long time to test and train and used the Riola sand. I didn't have the speed like I do on hard-pack so I still need to get faster. Valkenswaard was not too bad this year – a top ten – but I need more. The 250 is a good bike but I also like the 125 two-stroke. I won a lot with that in 2012. The 250 feels light and powerful though. I use a 450 for training because of even more power; it is quite useful for that! Overall we have worked really hard to be where we are and the results are coming slowly. I have improved a lot this year and I'm very happy. Supercross is still something for me. I think to go out and ride in front of 70 or 80,000 people would be a dream. We will talk about it and I hope we will go at some point. If I had to sum up things up then I'm happy; I think it is important to love to be on the bike.







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SBK

ROUND 6 MALAYSIA

SEPANG • JUNE 8th • Rnd 6 of 13

Race 1 winner: Marco Melandri, Aprilia

Race 2 winner: Marco Melandri, Aprilia



MELANDRI MELTS 'EM

**STICKY STUFF AT SEPANG FOR ROUND SIX OF WORLD
SUPERBIKE AND YET ANOTHER DOUBLE WINNER POPS UP AS
MARCO MELANDRI FINDS HIS FRONT TYRE**

Photos by Graeme Brown, Kawasaki Racing Team, Milagro,
Ducati Corse Press, suzuki-racing.com, Aprilia Racing

WORLD SBK MAL



PLAY



WORLD SBK MAL



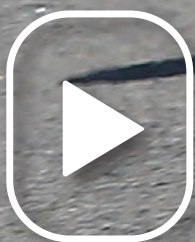
Aprilia chase-down. Melandri hunts the rear black rubber of Guintoli across the marked and moist Sepang tarmac

WORLD SBK MAL

Some pointed looks at Kawasaki after a first race nightmare for the team that added a cooler edge to the garage split between Sykes and Baz. The World Champion described Sepang ultimately as 'damage control'...







PLAY

Lavery seizes his chance ahead of Elias and Davies in two dramatic races in terms of incidents, stoppages and interruptions. It was the first top three for the Suzuki man since Australia



Electronic depression for Jonathan Rea who was never in contention for the podium due to an engine braking set-up issue







SBK CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

SBK RACE ONE RESULT

Riders

1	Marco Melandri, ITA	Aprilia
2	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	Aprilia
3	Eugene Laverty, IRL	Suzuki
4	Chaz Davies, GBR	Ducati
5	Toni Elias, SPA	Aprilia

SBK RACE TWO RESULT

Riders

1	Marco Melandri, ITA	Aprilia
2	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	Aprilia
3	Tom Sykes, GBR	Kawasaki
4	Toni Elias, SPA	Aprilia
5	Loris Baz, FRA	Kawasaki

SBK CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (6 of 14 rounds)

Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	201
2	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	188
3	Jonathan Rea, GBR	179
4	Loris Baz, FRA	170
5	Marco Melandri, ITA	147



WORLD SBK MAL



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A TAD ON THE WARM SIDE...

By Graeme Brown



What a weekend that was. Red hot in so many ways. First off the weather was remarkably calm. Nearly every time I have been to Sepang for testing or races you could guarantee heavy rain at some point. This weekend bucked that trend and from Thursday onwards each day just got clearer and warmer. It did mean that there were a few 'hot' heads come race day on Sunday.

Cross channel relations took a turn for the worst at Kawasaki when Loris Baz ran too hot into turn 2 and, in grabbing an excessive handful of brake, lost the front and wiped out team-mate, 2013 champion and current points leader Tom Sykes along with Suzuki's Alex Lowes. That certainly blew Tom's gasket and things reached boiling point when they both got back to the garage. Insults flew back and forward whilst the mechanics set about repairing the bikes and neighbours Aprilia stopped watching the race in their own pit box and pressed up against the keyhole.

With Sykes and Baz missing out on a points score in race one things are also hotting up in the title dispute. We are now on to our fourth double of the season with Sykes doing the double in Aragon and Donington, Jonathan Rea in Imola and now Melandri at Sepang. Melandri believes that a similar result in Misano will see him right back in the hunt for the championship. This could also be a trend for this year where one rider/bike combination is dominant at different tracks. Sylvain Guintoli was pretty confident at the pre-race event at the Petronas Towers. Chatting to none other than five times GP World Champion Mick Doohan he was pretty candid in predicting that the Aprilia would go well with the long straights at Sepang. He wasn't wrong, setting pole position on Saturday but had to give second best to his team-mate Melandri in both races. The Italian was pretty fired up at the end of the day and reportedly told Italian journalists that before the weekend he was ready to fight for the

win and fuck everyone who didn't think he could! It's an interesting thing to see how some machines are markedly different at one track and not so hot at another. Jonathan Rea had been looking like the man to catch after three consecutive and pretty dominant wins until we reached Donington. He was lamenting the fact that his engine braking was too severe for this track and when the tyre lost grip in the latter part of the race he suffered really bad chatter. It would seem that electronics have inadvertently taken over again in WSBK and if the tech wizards can 'dial' in the settings then everything comes together. Fortunately for now it hasn't meant that we have had one completely dominant bike, team or rider. Tom Sykes and Kawasaki still look the strongest on each weekend. Whilst Aprilia were the main challengers last year they have struggled a bit in the early part of this season. Now, however, we cannot rule out Honda as well as Ducati and Suzuki who are making great steps forward and fighting for podium places.

Changes to WSBK rules was a pretty hot topic of conversation this weekend - AGAIN! Apparently they are almost ready to be published and we will see them just before or at the next race in Misano. Time will tell. Could there be a standard electronics package for all manufacturers? It is certainly a way of bringing down the costs but a downside could be that it benefits one team more than another. While we see one team getting it right for different tracks at the moment a standard ECU could see some machines just not at the races, so to speak.

I never thought I would say it but thankfully when I flew back into Glasgow on Monday afternoon it was only 18 degrees and raining. I was happy to see the back of 38 degrees and 80% humidity. I don't even think the central heating in my house goes that high. Things in the Championship are simmering nicely anyway...

STILL MOR?

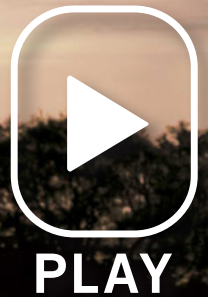
TWELVE YEARS ON SINCE THE LAST UPDATE OF THE VFR800F AND HAS HONDA'S REVISED 2014 VERSION OF THEIR PREMIER SPORTS TOURER SURGED TO THE FRONT OF THE SEGMENT? ROLAND BROWN EVALUATES

By Roland Brown, Photos by Zep Gori, Francesc Montero, Félix Romero and Ula Serra

2014 HONDA VFR800F







Honda faced a difficult balancing act in developing a new generation VFR sports-tourer. Those three letters have stood for V4-powered performance and quality ever since 1986, when the brilliant original VFR750F restored Honda's pride after a string of unreliable models.

But the classy VFR all-rounders that ruled the road, and even occasionally the track, in the late Eighties had become outclassed a decade later; and enlarging the V4 engine to 782cc to create the VFR800F in 2002 didn't restore the magic. Honda has taken another 12 years to deliver the next update but even this model is not a completely new bike, as it uses essentially

the same engine and frame as its predecessor. That conservative approach is understandable, if slightly disappointing coming from the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer. The market for conventional sports-tourers has shrunk dramatically as riders have switched to adventure bikes, making the investment in an all new VFR difficult to justify. This bike does get a subtly and effectively redesigned look, featuring slimmer and sharper bodywork in classy red, white or black paintwork, plus a new, X-shaped headlight that echoes the larger VFR1200F.

TEST

Instead of redesigning the dohc, 16-valve V4 unit for more power, Honda retuned it for improved low- and midrange performance, with new cams and revised fuel-injection. The result is maximum output of 104bhp that's a few horsepower down on the previous model's — and, almost bizarrely, also one horsepower down on the original VFR750F of almost 30 years ago.

Although the main aluminium frame spars are retained, most of the chassis is new, including the single-sided swing-arm and a rear subframe that is now made from aluminium instead of steel. Replacing the old model's two side-mounted radiators with one in front of the engine, and substituting a low-level exhaust system for the previous under-seat silencers, also contributed to an overall weight loss of 10kg, giving a respectable total of 239kg.

That helps make the VFR feel quite sporty by sports-tourer standards. So does a riding position that leans you forward to clip-on handlebars, albeit ones that are slightly higher and further back than the previous model's. The seat is now height adjustable, as well as generously sized. You can leave the colour-matched pillion seat cover in place, or remove it for a passenger, who's provided with sturdy, retractable grab-handles.

There's no choice of engine mode, but that's not a problem. Throttle response is excellent all through the range, and the V4 motor stays smooth enough to encourage plenty of revs. Performance at lower revs is extremely strong, making the VFR both quick and very easy to ride. Generally it also changed gear very efficiently, with the help of Honda's first accessory quick-shifter. But a couple of times the six-speed box found a false neutral that sent revs soaring.

Most of the time the engine's noise was a plus, especially when the revised, smoother acting VTEC system (which stops one inlet and one exhaust valve in each cylinder from opening at low revs, boosting torque by increasing mixture speed) kicked in at about 7000rpm with a throaty scream that added to the sense of speed. There's enough power for a top speed of 140mph and relaxed cruising at normal highway speeds. There's also a new, non-adjustable traction control system that is worth having, though its effectiveness was hard to judge.



2014 HONDA VFR800F





2014 HONDA VFR800F



Handling and ride quality are good, if not outstanding. The VFR has relatively simple but effective 43mm forks with preload and rebound damping adjustment, and a single rear shock with a remote knob to adjust the preload. The combination works well, giving light handling plus high-speed stability. Brakes are powerful, with new radial four-piston calipers and an efficient ABS system.

In some respects the VFR does a fine job of providing the practicality that is a key to any sports-tourer. Much detailing is excellent, including standard fitment self-cancelling indicators, heated grips and centre-stand. The new instrument panel with its centrally placed tachometer looks neat, and its information includes fuel consumption and gear position. The 21.5-litre tank gives a range of about 200 miles.



But the instrument panel's info can't be scrolled through from the handlebar. There's no cruise control, let alone a colour display with sat-nav or smart-phone integration that would add to the Honda's touring ability. The low, non-adjustable screen generates plenty of wind noise. And there's no sign of the electronically adjustable or even semi-active suspension that would be expected of a new sports-tourer from rivals such as BMW or Ducati. So in some senses this revamped VFR is a missed opportunity to raise the sports-tourer bar. But Honda's conservative update has at least allowed them to keep the price competitive (£10,499 in the UK, £800 more than Kawasaki's rival Z1000SX). And this is the best VFR yet: a stylish, fast, sweet-handling, respectably versatile and comfortable all-rounder with a distinctive V4 character. Although it doesn't define sports-touring performance in the way that its predecessors once did, it's still a very appealing bike.

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A KING'S RETURN...

By Matthew Roberts



How cool was it to see the old Jorge Lorenzo back in business at Mugello last week?

In 2008 I had the honour of translating Lorenzo's biography 'My Story So Far', which was written by Ernest Riveras working closely with the rider himself. At the time Jorge was just 21, maybe a little young for a biography by most people's standards, although as he said himself in the prologue he penned himself: "I am a double 250cc World Champion and the MotoGP Rookie of the Year. That forms the basis of a good story don't you think?"

The often pretentious swagger of that brash young man gradually eroded (thankfully) as he matured into the likeable, articulate and erudite double MotoGP World Champion he is today. Over the years Lorenzo polished his character along with his riding and arguably even in 2013, in spite of losing his title to Marc Marquez, he had still proven himself to be the most complete rider on the grid.

So it was alarming to say the least to witness his implosion over the opening five rounds of this season. Since returning from a string of promotional tours and holidays in the far east either side of winter testing he has looked unfit, demotivated and a shadow of the self-styled 'Spartan warrior' that his fans adore. We can only speculate but to me he seemed to be distracted by the frightening pace of Marc Marquez and the performance of the Honda. Consistently outpaced by his team-mate Valentino Rossi, Lorenzo's own performances in the first five races were impetuous and error-prone.

A total of just 55 points represented his worst start to a season since 2006, when he had 63 points at the same stage.

Reflecting on that 2006 season in 'My Story So Far', Lorenzo recalls a pivotal moment in his life: a chance meeting with Alex Debon in the Clinica Mobile on the eve of the race at Mugello. Besieged by personal problems and in the midst of a stressful and highly public falling out with his own father, Lorenzo was struggling to focus and his career was in peril. The experienced Debon could see the pain in the youngster's face and tried to help him.

"Think of this race as 'the return of the King,'" he told him. "You push on and I'll cover your back. I'll be behind you, like a bodyguard." The next morning, backed up by Debon in a typically fierce battle at the front, Lorenzo stormed to victory and kick-started a run of nine podiums, including six wins that would eventually seal the championship.

The inner workings of a MotoGP rider's mind remains a mystery to us all but maybe there was a bit of that old Mugello magic in the air last Sunday, when Lorenzo pulled out a vintage performance to take the fight to Marquez against the dramatic backdrop of those Tuscan hills. The Yamaha may still be lacking something to the Honda but from the rider everything else was there: the concentration, the fitness and the fire.

On this occasion there was no win and with such a huge deficit to Marquez in the championship it may not prove to be the 'return of the King' just yet, but at least in Italy the signs were there that Jorge is willing to fight for a crown again. His next and potentially his most significant challenge is to defend his flag at the Circuit de Catalunya, Lorenzo's Land since 2012.



BACKPAGE

Monster Energy G
Ray Archer







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'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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